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The USIB has considered the reactions to the deployment and use of OXCART and has set forth its assessment in SNIE 10-2-66 of 17 March 1966, which is here for your perusal.

The general thrust of the assessment is that, though problems for the US might arise, they probably would be manageable. Here, briefly, are the probable reactions:

A. China.

1. We believe the Chinese would not take any drastic new military action. There is some chance that Peking might conclude that the US was seeking target intelligence which it meant to use at an early date, especially if the overflights began intensively; however, the Chinese would probably soon come to regard this vehicle as another stage in a continuing US collection program.
2. Peking probably would remain silent to successful overflights of Chinese territory, as they have done in the case of successful U-2 flights. If an aircraft came down in China, however, there would be a major political and propaganda outcry.

B. North Vietnam:

Nothing of significance.

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C. The USSR: [redacted] The Soviets would be primarily concerned to forestall use of the aircraft over their own territory, and might privately warn the US of the seriousness with which they would view such intrusions. They would probably reinforce any Chinese or North Vietnamese propaganda campaigns, but would almost certainly not make it the occasion of a major crisis in US-Soviet relations.

D. Japan: Japanese leftists probably would portray the aircraft as a nuclear-capable weapon and try to raise fears of Japanese involvement in Vietnam or in direct actions against China. The Sato government could probably deal with the situation, though he might have to ask the US to discontinue the program if the Chinese extensively sought to exploit the issue.

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F. Other Non-Communist Countries: There would be some fairly vociferous criticism from certain quarters and some pressure on the US to desist lest the risk of Chinese Communist overt intervention in the Vietnam war be increased. In our opinion, however, nothing approaching the outcry over the U-2 affair in 1960 would occur.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Sherman Kent

Here is the condensed version of the Ox matter which I have forwarded to CGS. I understand you will have an opportunity to attend a session with the Director on this matter at five o'clock Monday.



1 April 1966
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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